




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

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MEMBER'S STATEMENTS

Construction Industry, Member for Cairns

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (2.58 pm): It is great to follow the member for Cairns because my contribution to the House is all about his contribution to the House during the Private Member's Motion on Tuesday. He made a claim that Labor had killed the construction industry when, in fact, it was only because of government projects like the Cairns Hospital redevelopment and the expansion of Lotus Glen prison that there was any significant work at all. He did not once mention the GFC and there was no mention of finance drying up for private borrowers. By boasting about the returned tourism numbers, he basically tried to single-handedly take credit for the falling Australian dollar, which has had more impact on tourism than he has. However, it was on employment figures that he was most disingenuous.

Just like the Treasurer, he failed to mention the state's unemployment rate of 6.3 per cent, a higher unemployment rate than during the GFC. Instead the member for Cairns continued with simplistic and misleading language claiming that 'Cairns has its mojo back'. In the Cairns ABS statistical area the youth unemployment rate has nearly doubled, from 11 per cent in March 2012 to 21.8 per cent in April 2014.

Talking up confidence in the far north is critical to our region's economic recovery, and I am all in favour of that, but the member for Cairns continues to bury his head in the sand. With his words, the member for Cairns simply ignored the young people in Cairns who are out of work. Does he simply not care, or is it that there is no plan for young unemployed people from his party? Unlike this Newman LNP government, the Labor Party has a plan to assist the unemployed back into work through our Ready for Work policy. Previously, the member for Cairns has been highly critical of original ABS figures, saying that they are 'typically volatile' and that people should refer to the yearly average figures. On this we agree, but what did the member for Cairns refer to in parliament this week? Well, of course he cherry picked the original figure for April to try and claim that unemployment in Cairns had fallen under the Newman government. Those 'typically volatile' figures were again used to deny the reality of unemployment in Cairns.

For the benefit of the member for Cairns, the year ending unemployment rate in April 2014 is 8.1 per cent, up from 7.9 per cent in March 2012. But the LNP never lets facts get in the way of good spin. By presenting these figures this way, and knowing that they are volatile, he is cheating the people of Cairns. As teachers say to students at school who cheat, in the end the only person who has been cheated by the member for Cairns is the member for Cairns himself. He will cheat himself out of his own seat at the next election.

While he is in denial about the reality of youth unemployment in the Cairns region, people out there are hurting. This denial is an insult to the young people in Cairns who are trying to find work. So too is it an insult to ignore the plight of unemployed people under 30, some of whom now face

surviving for six months with no income because of Tony Abbott's budget of broken promises. What we have very clearly seen is that the facts do not seem to matter and, when it comes to the LNP, Campbell Newman and Tony Abbott are two peas in a pod. It seems that if there was room for an extra pea in that pod, it would include the member for Cairns. The only party in Queensland that has policies to help young unemployed people back into work is the Australian Labor Party.